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THE WASHINGTON HERALD

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WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1910.

TALKS TO PEOPLE OF WORLD

Edward D. Easton, Real Live Product of Washington, Who Is Doing Big Things—What Counts in Invention.

By JAMES B. MORROW.

New York, Nov. 26.—The telephone, a curious contraption, the people thought, was put on exhibition in Philadelphia during the summer of 1876.

A decade later the graphophone or phonograph, meaning a machine that talked, again amused an interested but skeptical public.

The strange romance of the telephone has been told in the courts. Alexander Graham Bell, who had been a teacher of deaf and dumb children in Boston, found that he could send the human voice over a wire with the help of electricity. Elisha Gray, of Chicago, a blacksmith and a carpenter in his youth, and afterward a scientific man, made the same discovery.

The applications for a patent from Bell and Gray were received in Washington on St. Valentine's Day, 1876. It was a remarkable coincidence. Bell's thick, official-looking letter beat Gray's by an hour or two, as it was officially stated. There were other inventors afterward and suits of interference, but Bell was given his patent.

Time, measured by scant minutes, if nothing else, made Bell a millionaire and cut his name in the granite foundation of science. Gray, battling hard, was beaten. He is scarcely known to-day, except to electrical engineers and students.

Lacking in Organization.

But the telephone, although patented—as necessary now, it almost seems, as bread and water—failed to gain the serious interest of important men of business. Bell, a Scotchman by birth, was lacking in organizing genius. His future father-in-law, Gardiner Green Hubbard, was a Boston lawyer. Bell had taught his little daughter, and from teacher had turned lover. Thomas Saunders, of Massachusetts, imaginative and adventurous, put his personal fortune in hazard by cash advances that amounted to $150,000.

But the telephone was still a toy, in popular opinion—a plaything for wizards and electricians. For two years it hung uncertain upon the border line that separates the desert of failure from the happy continent of profit.

Then Theodore Newton Vail came into the business. He has been in the business ever since, although, in a sense, intermittently. Occasionally he retires to his 5,000-acre farm in Vermont, where he raises horses, ponies and pigs, but when there are telephone perplexities or problems in finance he always comes back by request. Recently he welded Gould's telegraph to the Bell telephone system, and thus his wires zigzag the whole country.

Out of the invention by which the human voice was transmitted from place to place, came the talking machine by which the human voice was engraved on wax and reproduced whenever wanted. Vail "organized and nationalized an idea," to use his own language, as he used it to me when I interviewed him in Boston. What he did for the telephone commercially, a wide-visioned and daring stenographer by the name of Edward Denison Easton did for the graphophone or phonograph. And Bell was in both inventions.

Discovered by Hubbard.

To Hubbard, the lawyer, belongs the credit of discovering Vail, the business manager. Easton discovered himself. Vail was an officer in the Post-office Department at Washington. Hubbard, cross-examining him in a lawsuit and learning his quality, hired him to popularize a plaything and to develop an electrical curiosity into an apparatus of world-wide utility. Telephone shares sold at $40 apiece in 1878. Vail multiplied each share eight times in eight years, so that $40 in 1878 was equal in selling value to $1,20 in 1886.

Meanwhile, Bell brought $10,000 home from Europe. He had won the Volta prize of the French Academy for his startling electrical achievement. With the money thus obtained he established a laboratory. Out of the laboratory came the graphophone. The telephone and the graphophone, therefore, are blood relatives.

The telephone and talking machine were exploited from Washington, instead from a commercial or industrial city. Vail was an officeholder. Easton was a government shorthand writer. Vail's share owners were mostly New England men. Easton sold some of his stock to James G. Blaine and to Senators and Representatives in Congress. To-day he is president of the most important talking machine company in the world. He is the real creator, in fact, of the talking machine business.

Doubtless he is a multimillionaire. At all events, he owns a park of 300 acres in New Jersey, where there are groves and rows of trees, lakes and ponds, a Methodist church, a new but ancient looking mill as a scenic accessory, and a group of cottages for himself and his married relations. Moreover, he is in banks and has other desirable connections.

"No man," I was surprised to hear Mr. Vail say, "and I include Bell himself, made so much as $1,500,000 out of the telephone invention and its subsequent expansion."

The statement, to me, was rather amazing.

Enriched His Associates.

Coming ten years later, the country being full of eager investors and of mourners who had drawn money out of banks for telephone shares, but had hurriedly put it back after thinking the matter over, Easton, also with a toy, it was supposed, has kept his stockholders together, pushed his business to the ends of the earth, and enriched his associates.

It is well enough to say, in passing, that Mr. Easton was born at Gloucester, Mass., in 1856. As a boy he lived in New Jersey. At the age of eighteen he was assistant editor of the Hackensack Republican. Thence he went to Washington as a stenographer. Afterward he was graduated in law from Georgetown University.

"My first service in Washington," he told me, "was with the lighthouse board, of which George Dewey (now Admiral of the Navy) was chairman. I worked hard to make myself a competent shorthand writer and was employed in many important government cases and in several historical investigations by Congress. I was one of the stenographers for the electoral commission that decided the disputed election of 1876 and gave the Presidency to Rutherford B. Hayes. We thought at first that Tilden would be seated and that all of us would lose our jobs.

"Likewise, I helped to report the trial of Guiteau. While I am not a medical expert, I dare to say that had Guiteau shot a private citizen instead of the President of the United States he would have been declared a lunatic and his life spared. He was the most offensively egotistical individual I ever saw, writing his autograph with noisy delight for hundreds of silly men and women who came to the courthouse in droves, butting into the testimony of witnesses with dramatic observations and theatrical gestures, and, I actually believe, going to the gallows proud of the added notoriety that his execution would bring to his name in the newspapers next morning."

"When did you first hear of the graphophone?" I asked.

Would Reproduce Sound.

"While working around the Capitol in Washington. Several stenographers, Andrew Devine especially, told me of a talking machine they had seen in Graham Bell's laboratory. Edison had once experimented with an apparatus that would reproduce sound. However, the records he employed were made of tinfoil. They could not be taken from the machine, which was very heavy, being constructed of iron; nor could they be used more than once. When Edison undertook his campaign to bring electric illumination into buildings and houses, from out in the streets where Charles F. Brush had put it with his arc light, he laid his phonograph aside.

"Returning from Paris with $10,000 in cash, given him as a prize, Graham Bell equipped a laboratory for the purpose of inventing a machine that would record and reproduce sounds. I suppose music was in his mind at the time. The work was carried on by Dr. Chichester Bell—a relative of Graham Bell—and Charles Sumner Tainter, a mechanical expert, of Watertown, Mass. It was the Bell and Tainter machine that I heard Devine and other stenographers talking about.

"Later, I was invited to the laboratory and saw the machine in operation. I found that while I had spent years in learning quickly to put human speech on paper by means of signs that the machine could beat me easily and do the work better and more accurately. In my diary, that night, I wrote that I meant to get as large an interest in the invention as was possible. My connection with the subsequent development of the graphophone, therefore, was not accidental. The supposition was that the machine would make the dictation of letters in business offices to stenographers unnecessary. The musical possibilities of the invention were not then apparent. I employed it right off, being the first stenographer to do so in government work. I dictated my shorthand notes into the machine and had my typist write them out on paper.

Gone Seven Days.

"About that time, it was in the year 1887, I accompanied the newly created Interstate Commerce Commission on its first trip of investigation. We were gone seven working days, during which period I made $3,500. My salary was only $100 a month, but I received 10 cents a page extra for transcribing my stenographic notes and was permitted to supply all the persons in interest with full copies of the testimony taken at the different hearings. Well, I put my $3,500 into the graphophone business."

"Your faith," I remarked "was all that could have been desired on the part of Bell and Tainter."

"I did more than invest my money," Mr. Easton replied. "I gave two years of my time to the company without any salary. I had been earning $20,000 a year as a government stenographer. I abandoned a good business in the belief that the talking machine ultimately would pay me far better, a judgment that was justified in every respect."

"My friend, Arthur Devine, also became an important share owner. James G. Blaine, William Walter Phelps, of New Jersey; R. R. Hitt, of Illinois, long a member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations; Senator Allison, of Iowa, and Senator Morrill, of Vermont, bought stock. Years afterward Wu Tingfang, the Chinese minister, came into the company as an investor.

"While I was yet a stenographer I took one of our laboratory machines with me on all my travels. I would send for the newspaper reporters when I reached a city like Chicago and let them hear and see the very latest wonder in electricity. Among the sounds I reproduced was the crying of my own baby. That particular demonstration was tremendously popular. The machine, in short, created a big sensation, as was natural under the circumstances. Indeed, it is the greatest of all mechanical inventions, greater than the telegraph, the telephone, or the steam engine. It takes down the voice of man just as it sounds, recording every word and every shade, and preserves it or continues it for ages to come.

Trying for Century.

"Scientists in different parts of the world had been trying for more than 100 years to catch and hold the sounds of human voice," Mr. Easton went on to say. "The Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg offered a prize in 1779 for an instrument that would talk. Experiments were later made in Paris and Vienna. Faber, an Austrian, produced an apparatus in the year 1850 that gave some impetus to modern inventors and he was followed by Leon Scott and finally by Edison, along in 1877. After Edison abandoned his investigations nothing was done for several years by any one, so far as I can learn.

"Then came the announcement that Bell and Tainter had invented a practical machine that could actually talk. Moreover, their records could be removed, repeatedly used, kept indefinitely and transported by mail or express. They had worked for five years in Graham Bell's laboratory. When I first saw the machine they were unwilling to make their invention known until it had been further developed. My idea was to strike while the iron was hot, a view they accepted with some reluctance.

"We rented a back room on a side street in Washington and began business. Our first factory employed six men and its capacity was three machines a day. Now we are manufacturing two machines a minute. In a little while we moved to a better building, where the rent was $300 a month. It was a risky undertaking, we thought. However, by that time we could reproduce simple songs, banjo playing, and band music, and had slot machines that would sing or talk for a nickel. We assumed the financial obligation of $300 a month with fear and trembling. The slot machines, much to our surprise, paid the first month's rent in three days and there was money enough left for our electric lighting.

Slot Machines Paid.

"Stores were quickly established in all the principal cities, and in each instance, though we rented rooms in the thick of business, the slot machines paid all the expenses. In the meantime we were selling graphophones and keeping our factory busy. Stores were also opened in Europe. The slot machines finally lost their interest, but they had permitted us to build up our retail business without expense, and had more than accomplished their purpose.

"Is it true," I asked, "that very large sums of money are paid to famous singers for records of their best songs?"

"Like most stories of money-making, the figures have been somewhat exaggerated. At first, we got three songs from Sembrich for $2,000. Edouard de Reszke, the celebrated bass singer, gave us three songs for $1,000. In time Schumann-Heink, Campanari, Lilli Lehmann, Bispham, Mary Garden, and Cavalieri sang for us very willingly. Indeed, we have laboratories in Paris, Warsaw, Vienna, St. Petersburg, London, Milan, and other European cities, and singers supply us with such records as we may want from time to time. The old way of paying cash in advance, however, was unsatisfactory, and so a system of royalties was substituted. Famous singers, I have no doubt, earn as much money by means of the talking machine as they do in operas or concerts. The graphophone, I should say, actually doubles their earnings.

"Records sell at from 35 cents to $7.50 apiece, the latter being a sextet from 'Lucia' by great vocalists. We have a laboratory in China and the records of 400 Chinese songs, which were given us by the best Mongolian artists. The music may sound something like a chicken eating corn off a pine board, but that is because we can't understand or appreciate it. Laundrymen in this country are large purchasers of Chinese records, thus getting songs from home in their own language to cheer them as they iron our shirts and collars. The manufacturers of American talking machines are doing business everywhere—in Japan, Turkey, Africa, Egypt, and the islands scattered up and down the earth, from Australia to Greenland, and then to Madagascar. More than $20,000,000 is invested in the industry, and thousands of persons are given steady and pleasant employment."

"Will political speeches and lectures ever be delivered by machinery?" I inquired.

Stumping by 'Phone.

"Mechanically, there would be no difficulty in having Senator La Follette, Speaker Cannon, J. Pierpont Morgan, or Elihu Root make a tour of all the Chautauqua assemblies in the United States by voice alone. Nothing would be missing but the fire in their eyes, their gestures, and the magnetism of their personal presence. But audiences, in my opinion, would not care to hear a long speech, lecture, or sermon out of a graphophone. Nor would the people sit through an opera. They would go to sleep or get up and go out. There are plenty of dull spots in the best of operas. We have gone on the idea that only the gems in a lengthy musical composition are practicable for reproduction.

"President Taft, talking in a horn, has courteously given us several short addresses. Plenty of his countrymen will never see him, and they want to hear his voice. His address on foreign missions has been repeated in hundreds of churches and has done a great deal of good. We have records from William J. Bryan, but Col. Roosevelt turned us down. Joseph Jefferson gave us part of a scene from "Rip Van Winkle," and we were about to get some of Bill Nye's jokes when he died.

"It is unfortunate that the phonograph was not invented centuries ago, that the voices of great orators might have been heard for all ages to come. Demosthenes and Cicero might be living yet. And all Americans would be glad, I know, were it possible for them to hear George Washington, Patrick Henry, Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. One of my missionary friends is sending me records of hymns sung by Sunday school children in China, and I am sending hymns sung in this country to Christian workers in the Orient."

"What other uses," I asked, "are being made of talking machines?"

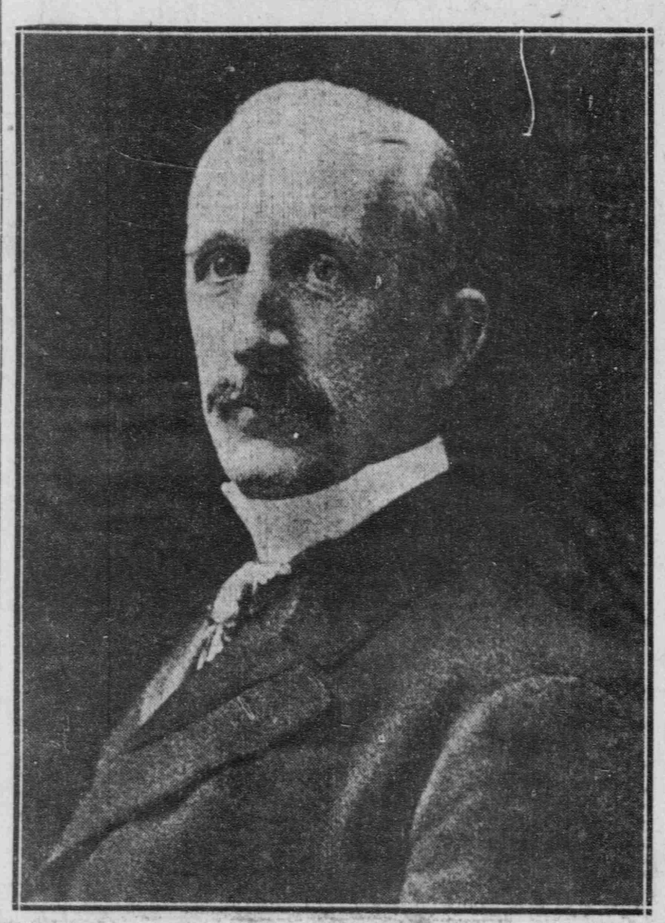
Aid to Hospitals.

"Physicians at hospitals are getting records of coughs that are peculiar and of breathings that will help them in the diagnosis of certain diseases. Eminent vocalists are singing musical exercises upon records of wax, which, together with the text-book in hand, are invaluable to students. Moving pictures by and by will be enabled to talk and the adjustment will be so perfect that every motion of the hands and movement of the lips will fit the words. Languages have been taught for years with the help of the graphophone. The advantages of such teaching are obvious. One can learn French as it is spoken in Paris and German as it is spoken in Berlin."

"What other uses will be found?" I inquired.

"I think the personal correspondence between relatives and friends will be largely carried on by machinery before long. In the past there has been trouble in making a cheap record that was strong enough to be transported in the mails. The difficulty has almost been overcome. I am sure that at an early day one will find it not alone convenient but pleasurable to talk a love letter or a family letter into a graphophone and then to have it carried to its destination for a 2-cent postage stamp.

"The voice of one's mother, sister, father, or sweetheart would sound mighty good if one were far away from home. Writing would be unnecessary and the record would cost little more, perhaps, than stationery."



EDWARD D. EASTON.

FIGURES IN ROMANCE OF PHONOGRAPH.

HELP FOR PRISONERS

Agent Massie Doing Noble Work in Capital.

CHARACTER STUDY NECESSARY

Working Among Unfortunate Persons in the Interest of the Prisoners' Aid Society, Agent Accomplishes Great Work by Assisting Inmates to New Start in Life.

Mr. Charles A. Massie, the agent of the Prisoners' Aid Society of Washington, is doing a large and noble work for humanity. Although up to a few weeks ago he was not an official of the Police Court, the court would hardly have known what to do without him for many years past, as his presence and activity enabled the "quality of mercy" and the further upbuilding of good citizens to outshine the mere exactions of justice.

The Prisoners' Aid Society has been in existence since the Spanish war. Mrs. Mary F. Case at that time established resting places and provided refreshment for the soldiers in the city, in order to keep them out of saloons, and Mr. Massie and others became interested in the care of the soldiers. Mrs. Case's activity and the discovery by Mr. Massie that a police station at that time was the only place of refuge for the children who were brought in from the street, was the beginning of the formation of the Prisoners' Aid Society. Mr. Massie has been doing work among prisoners for twenty-eight years. The problem of heredity with which he has to cope so often in its tendency to evil among his proteges has in himself proved an enormous power for good, as his forefathers were engaged in prison work.

In every case where a person has been arrested for an offense against the District, Mr. Massie goes into the prisoners' cage, gets their story before the trial, and their confidence also, if possible in so short a time. Cases of lawbreaking through ignorance, carelessness, and where the one accused is young, are turned over to Mr. Massie by the court. He pays the fine if there is one, and if they live out of the District sends them to their homes, or finds the right shelter for them. Saving young offenders the close contact with criminals in prison life is an incalculable blessing.

Character Study Necessary.

Mr. Massie's judgment and insight into character is quite unusual and very necessary in this work. Of the money which he has advanced to pay fines and to return persons to their homes during seven years' time 90 per cent has been returned to him, and those owing the remaining 10 per cent were in all probability unable to reimburse him. That "truth is stranger than fiction" is well substantiated in the tragedy and romance told by hundreds of letters and telegrams which Mr. Massie receives from parents and children whom he has helped and who correspond with him regularly. These come from all parts of the world and are filled with gratitude. This Christ-like man succeeds in winning the officers of the law to co-operate with him in helping the fallen to "forget the steps already trod and onward urge their way."

To this work, regardless of differences of race or religion, Mr. Massie, who is an Episcopalian, has given himself without remuneration for many years. For a short time the association was able to give him a small salary, but owing to lack of sufficient subscriptions it has been impossible during most of his service, the funds being all applied to the work—"and yet there is room."

On October 17 he was appointed chief probation officer of the Police Court under the law passed at the last session of Congress, which provided for three probation officers, one at the Criminal Court and two at the Police Court. Mr. Massie's appointment, for practically the same work he has been doing, carries with it a salary of $1,500 a year, a well deserved reward.

Mr. Massie is a type of muscular Christianity capable of commanding obedience. The names of persons aided by the Prisoners' Aid Society are held sacred, and many persons above the class commonly called criminals have been saved much suffering and disgrace. The present officers are Bishop Alfred Harding, president; the Rev. Richard P. Williams, archdeacon of Washington, vice president; the Rev. W. J. D. Thomas, chaplain; Miss Mary F. Case, treasurer; Miss Rachel Levy, secretary; Mrs. John Sherman, financial secretary; Dr. Ida Heiberger, physician, and Charles Alfred Massie, agent.

Twenty-six thousand persons have been helped to positions of trust and 8,000 have been returned to their homes in other cities during the existence of the society. The report for one year's work is as follows:

Number of visits paid	675
Number of persons assisted	2,778
Number of persons sent home, out of the city	702
Employment found for	63
Clothing furnished to	124
Homes found for	34
Released from the workhouse	112
Released from jail	27
Amount paid for railroad fares and fines	$3,678 09
Amount paid for railroad fares and fines returned	3,220 27
Balance out	457 82

"While the foregoing figures would indicate the handling of a large sum of money, it must be noted that no such amount has ever been in our possession. It has been by the repeated use of small amounts that the aggregate has been reached.

Cost Is Not Large.

Excluding all other assistance rendered and work done, there is the astonishing fact that for less than $2.16 a person 2,848 people have been taken from the most demoralizing surroundings and, instead of being left stranded among strangers, restored to their homes.

In addition to all this many times the amount paid out by this department has been saved to the people of the District. It is safe to say that the saving to the public through the work of the department has been not less than $50,000.

The stories of persons who have been helped speak more effectually than anything that can be said about them. The following are a few of the many:

An old soldier, who was addicted to drink, was found one morning by Mr. Massie in the station house, thinking over his past career with shame and discouragement. When approached by Mr. Massie in a friendly way, he confessed that no one had cared what became of him for years. Mr. Massie asked him if he believed in God or had ever prayed to Him. He responded that he had said the Lord's Prayer, to which Mr. Massie replied:

"I say Our Father, too, so we are brothers. What is the matter with you? Shake!"

Thus he touched the right chord, and eventually the soldier was entirely reclaimed and joined the Prisoners' Aid Society, to which he paid his annual dues until the day of his death.

A young man was arrested as a vagrant who had come to Washington to find employment, but got into bad company and was sent to the workhouse, where Mr. Massie found him and sent him back to his home, having first provided him with decent clothing, including an overcoat, as the cold was extreme. Then, through trustworthy people, employment was at once found for him, and in one month's time the overcoat was returned, accompanied by a note, saying that he was now able to buy one for himself, and the one he was sending might "help some other unfortunate."

Before the appointment of well-trained deaconesses at the Union Station, Mr. Massie has often been a savior to unsophisticated young women, who, while stopping over even one train, would have become entangled to their downfall.

One young girl was lured from a mill town by an apparently responsible woman with promise of better wages, which the girl much needed for the support of her family. The woman had been sent out from a disreputable house in search of a pretty face. When, on arriving in Washington, the innocent girl discovered the nature of her surroundings, she managed to escape, although wearing clothing which she woman had loaned her and which she was obliged to pawn in order to meet her traveling expenses home. Being in consequence arrested as a thief, she was returned to Washington and found by Mr. Massie at the station house before court opened, where he learned her true story.

Starts Life Anew.

The whole case, the innocence of the girl, her distress, and the publicity given to the affair so worked upon the woman who had preferred the charge against the girl that she was reclaimed, actually forsaking her evil life and starting anew in a respectable business far from her old associations, while the girl was saved to society.

A visit to Mr. Massie from a multimillionaire, a philanthropic settlement worker, of New York, resulted from a casual remark made to the New Yorker by one of the poor boys there in whom he was interested: "Say, if you'se had a guy like Mr. Massie woikin' fer you'se here, we wouldn't 'a been sent to de Tombs. Why, he's de right sort."

"Who is Mr. Massie?" asked the gentleman.

"Git out! Don't you know 'im, sure enough? Why, he's de prisoner's friend down in Washington."

The gentleman lunched and dined with Mr. Massie, and saw him surrounded at his own board by his usual circle of ragged boys. On leaving, he said: "No wonder those boys in New York told me we ought to have a 'guy like Mr. Massie' there. It is a revelation to me."

"I was in prison, and ye visited Me."

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

COMMONS NEEDS REFORM

Both Houses of England's Parliament Require Overhauling to Satisfy Modern Business—Object to Science.

By EX-ATTACHE.

England's national legislature has often been described as the Mother of Parliaments, and as a model for popular assemblies in all those countries where representative government—that is to say, government for the people, by the people—has been obtained from the Crown, either by favor or by force. The news, therefore, that the House of Commons is bent upon obtaining, if not a divorce, at any rate a judicial separation from the House of Lords, and that two of the three component parts of Parliament have found themselves unable to work any longer in unison, after many hundreds of years of existence in common, is naturally calculated to excite interest in every quarter of the globe.

The Commons have always been disposed to arrogate to themselves the greater share of the powers of partnership. Now they wish to monopolize them altogether; to transform the upper chamber into a mere office for registering the decrees of the lower house, without any right of discussion or rejection. In fact, if the government had its way, the Lords will be reduced to such a state of impotency as to practically transform Parliament into a single chamber.

Spectacle of Greece.

Experience, however, has shown that governments, by means of a single chamber, are impracticable, and we have before us as an illustration thereof, the spectacle of Greece, where men of every political party interested in the welfare of the nation have expressed themselves in favor of the constitution of a senate, or some sort of an upper house to the Boule, as the only means of extricating the country from legislative impasse in which it has been floundering for so many years, involving the country in ruin at home and discredit abroad. Here in America it is impossible to conceive the government of the Union, or of any State, being administered save through an upper and a lower chamber, the former existing in order to constitute some restraint upon hasty, reckless, and possibly socialistic legislation by the lower chamber. Yet it is something very much akin to the abolition of the upper chamber that is now being sought by the Liberals in Great Britain, on the ground that the parliamentary machine which has done duty for so many centuries is no longer workable.

Of course, on the face of it, the disposition abroad, especially in republican countries, is to sympathize with the Liberals and to regard the House of Lords as a relic of medieval absolutism, and of class privilege altogether out of keeping with the democracy of life in the twentieth century.

But a little calm reflection soon gives birth to the conviction that a House of Lords which is ready to reform itself by the abandonment of hereditary rights to a seat on its benches, is quite as desirable a safeguard to the British Parliament as the United States Senate is to Congress at Washington; and that if the parliamentary machine in England is no longer in a working condition it is due not alone to the Lords, but also to the Commons. That the latter, with its apparent inability to distinguish between questions of imperial importance and matters that are merely parochial, and with its archaic formalities and unsatisfactory composition, is quite as much in need of reform as the House of Lords, and quite as much to blame for the parliamentary deadlock which has been reached.

For a deadlock it is; and it is because Great Britain's Parliament has ceased to be workable that just at the present moment the eyes of thoughtful people in every part of the universe—in North as well as in South America, in Japan, in China, in India, in Africa, Australia, and in the wilds of Siberia, as well as everywhere in Europe—are concentrated just now upon the palace of Westminster in London.

It is unnecessary to enter here more fully into the causes of the disputes, or rather series of disputes, which have resulted in war to the knife between the Lords and the Commons. The cable dispatches contain columns of information about the matter, and, moreover, events are now moving rapidly, the utmost ignorance prevailing as to the nature of each next step by the three component parts of Parliament, namely, Crown, Lords, and Commons. All, therefore, that it is possible to do under the circumstances is to call attention to some few features and oddities of this oldest of all legislative bodies in the world.

Perhaps the strangest thing about England's Parliament is to be found in the fact that although it is supposed to be the temple of oratory and the one place in the empire where eloquence reigns supreme, since the entire sessions of both houses are given up to discussion, that is to say, talk, it is the silent man who is held in the highest regard. The English are naturally a silent race.

Type of Legislator.

Their most popular type of national hero is "the strong, silent man" and the legislator who says nothing at all, merely demonstrating his views by his votes, or else who in a few brief, perhaps clumsily constructed, sentences says what he has to say, plainly and to the point, without any pretension to oratory, inspires a far greater degree of confidence, both in and out of Parliament, than the most carefully trained elocutionist or the most silvery-tongued speaker. Verbiage, no matter how melodious, inspires distrust, whereas blunt, direct speech appeals to the English-speaking races.

And that was why the late Duke of Devonshire, who spoke as little as he could, and was wont to yawn in the middle of his speeches, by reason, as he explained it, of their dreariness, was regarded by the bulk of his countrymen as a far safer man to follow than the most eloquent of all great commoners of the nineteenth century, namely, William Ewart Gladstone.

Perhaps the following little incident will illustrate just what I mean: At the time of the discussion in the House of Commons of the Chinese labor in South Africa controversy an entirely new member succeeded in an altogether unexpected fashion in catching the Speaker's eye. Perhaps it was the strangeness of his attire, the pilot coat, and the soft felt hat, contrasting so strangely with the silken tiles worn by the other members, which caused the occupant of the chair to accord him permission to speak.

Cheapness of Labor.

In a few, short, crisp sentences he gave them his reasons for his objections to the Chinese, on account of the cheapness of their labor, explaining that he had worked in South Africa as a laborer, and speaking to them as a laboring man. A sudden hush fell upon the House, every one listening intently. There was no disposition on either side of the House to even smile at his oddities of expression and at the transparent lack of culture, and even of education, in his utterances. Here was a man who knew by actual experience what he was speaking about, and who was saying it as briefly and as simply as he knew how. When he sat down Joseph Chamberlain arose from the opposite side of the House, and his opening words were to pay a compliment to this "strong son of the soil," and to express the interest with which the whole House had listened to his remarks. This called forth cheers and cries of "Hear! Hear!" from all parts of the great chamber.

There was a moment's surprise and hesitation on the part of the South African miner, and then the wideawake hat, large and strange enough to bring Mr. Gladstone out of his grave, was doffed in acknowledgment of the friendly welcome which he had received at the hands of his fellow-legislators.

On the other hand, a lawyer, renowned for his forensic successes at the bar, some pompous municipal big-wig or county magnate, or else the prize orator of one of the great universities, in the debating societies of which he carried all before him, will experience the utmost difficulty in securing a hearing. To-day probably the most brilliant public speaker in England is the Earl of Rosebery. Yet in the opinion of many it is just because of his gifts of eloquence that the bulk of the English people are so little inclined to accord to him their political confidence.

Object to Science.

Another thing to which the members of both Houses of Parliament object is omniscience. Thus, when on the very first night of the late Sir George Campbell's appearance in Parliament—he was a very brilliant man and a wonderfully clever speaker—he found something to say about crops in India, about wine in France, about land tenure in Ireland, and about roads and bridges in Scotland; he was then and there forever damned, and unable to make any position for himself in Parliament or to put his great abilities to any public use.

I have referred just now to the silk hats of the members of Parliament. So far as I am aware, it is the only national assembly, either in the Old World or in the New, where the members sit with their hats on. But while the member may wear it sitting, he must carry it when he walks. He must not move a yard along a bench without removing it or some stickler for parliamentary decorum will raise shouts of "Order! Order!"

Always Raises Hat.

When he is alluded to in a speech, he will raise his hat from his head in acknowledgment. When he formally submits a motion, he raises it again. Indeed, the hat is an integral part of Great Britain's legislative machinery. There are times when without it the workings of the English constitution would come to a standstill. When a division has been called and a member desires to address the chair, not only must he speak seated, but he must have his hat on, and, naturally, the humorists of the Commons endeavor that the raiser of a point of order should be unable to find his hat.

A point of order on a division is a serious matter, but the house is sometimes reduced to convulsions of laughter, when, with a silk hat borrowed in haste, which comes down over his ears, and would extinguish his head entirely if he did not hold it up with his hands, a member, with the gravest countenance, submits a point of order to the decision of Mr. Speaker. It was on one such occasion that Gladstone was subjected to the unique experience of exposing himself to ridicule.

He had a very large head, and had left his hat in the premier's room—he was in office. He wished to address the Chair in a hurry on a point of order, and quickly snatched at the first hat that was handed to him. It was many sizes too small for him. Yet there he sat, addressing the Speaker, balancing the insignificant little hat on his Olympian head, for all the world like an acrobat balancing a glass of water on his forehead, and even his greatest admirers were compelled to admit that for once the Grand Old Man looked excruciatingly absurd.

Usually Sits on It.

Of course, when the member rises to speak, he invariably doffs his hat, generally putting it on his seat behind him, and it is by no means infrequent, especially with new members, that after finishing their speech with a glowing peroration, they will sit down on their hat, and then regard the wreck with a rueful countenance. This is one of the quickest ways of attracting parliamentary attention. It is also cheap, for a silk hat serviceable for the purpose may be obtained for $6. Sitting on his own hat renders a member at once popular. He is hailed as a humorist. Everybody wants to know his name, and talks about him. He will be pointed out to visitors in the lobby. Possibly there will even be a picture of the event in one of the illustrated papers.

Another one of the unwritten laws of Parliament is that the reading of newspapers is forbidden while the house is in session. A member can talk, he can sprawl, he can perch his toes on the back of the bench in front, he may sleep, and he may snore. But he must not read a newspaper. Of course books are tolerated. For it may be assumed that they are parliamentary reports. But I doubt whether a monthly magazine would be permitted.

No one is permitted to speak, no matter how important the communication which he may have to make, without having caught that most vagrant of optics, namely, the Speaker's eye. The power of that eye, and the rights which it possesses, are not based on any written law, but long-established custom and tradition. Very often several members rise in their places at one and the same time endeavoring to arrest the eye of the Speaker, and it is then free to that august functionary to make his selection, and to indicate the member who has his permission to speak. This he does by addressing the lucky one as "The Member for So-and-so." This practice has prevailed since the days of Sir John Trevor. Prior to his time a look was sufficient. But Sir John Trever (who, by the way, was the only Speaker ever expelled from the House for bribery) squinted so terribly that no one could feel sure that he had caught the Speaker's eye until orally assured by the Speaker of the fact.

In the House of Commons it is always the Speaker who must be addressed, and never the house; whereas in the Lords the contrary is the case, since, strictly speaking, there is no Speaker there, the presiding officer, namely, the lord chancellor, having none of the powers that are usually vested in the president of any deliberative body. Of course, this is difficult to impress upon new members of the House of Commons, some of whom, in the flurry of their maiden speech, ignore the Speaker and address the house as "Gentlemen." Occasionally a nervous new member addresses the Speaker as "Mr. Chairman." Lawyers who have practiced at the bar are wont in their early days in the chamber to address him as "Me Lud," while it is on record that on one occasion a freshly elected Nationalist brought down the house by addressing him as "Yer Riverence."

The Size of the Sea.

From Tid-Bits.

An officer of a liner once remarked to the writer that most men seemed to be as ignorant about the size of the sea as they are of the distance between the heavenly planets. Here are a few facts: The Pacific covers 68,000,000 miles, the Atlantic 30,000,000, and the Indian ocean, Arctic, and Antarctic 42,000,000. To stow away the contents of the Pacific it would be necessary to fill a tank one mile long, one mile wide, and one mile deep every day for 440 years. Put in figures, the Pacific holds in weight 948,000,000,000,000,000,000 tons. The Atlantic averages a depth of not quite three miles. Its waters weigh 325,000,000,000,000,000,000 tons, and a tank to contain it would have each of its sides 450 miles long. The figures of the other oceans are in the same startling proportions. It would take all the sea water in the world 2,000,000 years to flow over Niagara.